

**THE ORIGINS AND EARLY HISTORY  
OF ALDERMAN NEWTON'S  
FOUNDATION**

**BY**

**R. W. GREAVES, M.A., D.PHIL. (OXON.)**

# The Origins and Early History of Alderman Newton's Foundation

By R. W. Greaves, M.A., D.Phil. (Oxon.)

## CHAPTER I

ALDERMAN NEWTON'S foundation is one of the most interesting educational establishments of the eighteenth century, both on account of its wide range, for it extended to several places besides Leicester, and because of the character of the Alderman himself.

Gabriel Newton came of a most respectable family, which seems largely to have influenced his outlook, and has therefore a bearing on the study of his benefactions. He was the son of Joseph Newton, a jersey comber, who died in 1688 at Lincoln, to which city he appears to have gone in 1684 to take charge of the jersey school organised by the Corporation there, "for the employment of the poor in knitting and spinning".<sup>1</sup> Joseph Newton was afterwards commemorated, in 1750, at the expense of his then opulent son Gabriel, by an inscription and palisade erected outside Lincoln cathedral at the request of the precentor then in office.<sup>2</sup>

Newton's family was in fact decidedly Tory, and therefore in that period, strictly Anglican. Several of his relatives reached a respectable eminence in the Established Church. The tablet that he erected at Lincoln commemorated, besides his father, his great-uncle, John Newton.<sup>3</sup> This John Newton, ordained in

<sup>1</sup>Historical Manuscripts Commission, XIVth Report, Appendix Part VIII, on the MSS. of Lincoln Corporation (1895), 18, 109, agreement with Joseph Newton of Leicester about the Jersey school, dated 4th June, 1684. A new master was appointed in 1687.

<sup>2</sup>Public Record Office, C 12/820/32.

<sup>3</sup>I conclude that, in spite of the nearness of their ages, and that John outlived Joseph Newton by over twenty years, John was Gabriel Newton's great uncle, on the ground of statements in C 12/820/32. James Naylor of the Newarke deposed, on the basis of his search of the records, that so far as his knowledge went, Joseph Newton died leaving no brothers, or sisters, other than Richard Walker's grandmother, Gabriel Newton's aunt and an unmarried sister. A statement by Richard Walker, the heir-at-law, that Joseph Newton had no brothers, may be treated as not necessarily good evidence. The same document, embodying the deposition of James Naylor described the tablet at Lincoln, which called John, Gabriel's uncle.

1661 to the diaconate, had been made vicar of St. Margaret's, Leicester in 1663, and in 1680, vicar of St. Martin's, while he held also the office of master of Wigston's hospital. His career of ecclesiastical preferment thus began roughly with the glorious Restoration that the eighteenth century Tories were so careful to commemorate; and the Newton family had from the outset an attachment to the Monarchy and the Church as these were ordered in 1660-2. In 1690 he left Leicester to become rector of Taynton in Gloucestershire; and, twenty years later, he became vicar of Sandhurst in the same county.<sup>4</sup> These two benefices became almost family livings, and were held by his son and grandsons after him. In 1690 he became a prebendary of Gloucester, a dignity he retained till his death in 1711.<sup>5</sup> The vehemence of John Newton's Toryism caused in Leicester, in the last year of his cure of souls there, a local scandal. This was hardly surprising when the public mind was in a state of agitation, and William III's tenure of the English throne was not yet by any means assured. In 1690, in barber-surgeon Pollard's shop in Leicester, Newton openly expressed a wish for the success of a rumoured French landing in the interest of the Stuarts. Information was lodged with the justices against him by the barber; but the Tory magistrates do not appear to have encouraged this Whiggish attack on the cloth.<sup>6</sup>

John Newton's son Benjamin succeeded his father at Taynton, and became a minor canon of Gloucester. For six years he served as headmaster of the cathedral grammar school of Gloucester, an experience from which he returned thankfully to the peaceful routine of a minor canon. To this he added the congenial duties of cathedral librarian. He held various preferments, and died in 1735 as rector of Llantwit in Glamorganshire. None the less, he died a poor man, and left his dependents ill-provided for. To ease their lot, therefore, a subscription edition of his sermons was published, in two comely volumes, in 1736, prefaced by a memoir written by his son John, who extolled in it Benjamin's piety, orthodoxy, loyalty and learning. Among the subscribers were Gabriel Newton, Alderman of Leicester, and the younger John himself, as "Mr. Newton, Gentleman Com-

<sup>4</sup>J. A. Venn: *Alumni Cantab*, Part i, Vol. III, (Cambridge, 1924), 252. He was also fellow of Clare hall, Cambridge.

<sup>5</sup>Le Neve: *Fasti Ecclesiastici*, continued by T. D. Hardy (1854), I, 450.

<sup>6</sup>Leicester Corporation, MS. Sessions Rolls, 1690.

moner of Corpus Christi college, Oxford",<sup>7</sup> together with such Leicester notables as Alderman John Cooper,<sup>8</sup> and Samuel Her- rick, attorney-at-law.

Again we find that Benjamin Newton also had the high Church and high Tory outlook of his family. His son tells us that he was "strictly attached to the Church of England and regularly conformable to the Doctrine and Discipline of his Pro- fession".<sup>9</sup> Further, as evidence of his Toryism, we find that he was presented to the Crown living of Allington, by that staunch Tory churchman, Nathan Wright, a former recorder of Leicester,<sup>10</sup> who held the office of Lord Keeper during the Tory ascendancy in the early part of Anne's reign.<sup>11</sup> A last evidence of Benjamin Newton's political orthodoxy is to be noticed in a sermon he preached in Gloucester cathedral, not many weeks after the crushing of the revolt of '15 at Preston and Sheriffmuir, on the anniversary of Charles I's death that next followed those critical events. This discourse shows that though Tory, Benjamin was no Jacobite, for the mayor and other magistrates of Gloucester desired it to be printed, on account of its "seasonable exhortation therein to loyalty to his present majesty King George".<sup>12</sup>

Enough has been said to show the principles that Gabriel Newton imbibed from his family. Of Benjamin junior, and of John, whom he remembered in his will, describing them as his cousins, not a great deal need be said. Benjamin junior inherited his father's scholarly tastes, and showed a particular interest in questions of morals and abstract politics. He was at the time of Gabriel's death, a fellow of Jesus college, Cambridge.<sup>13</sup> John, in the same period a minor canon of Gloucester, is for our present purpose also interesting. For, like Gabriel, he had a

<sup>7</sup>Venn., *loc. cit.*, J. Foster, *Alumni Oxon. 1715-1886* (1888), 1019.

<sup>8</sup>Presumably the Alderman Cooper who advised Samuel Carte on the framework knitting industry in Leicester, for the account Carte wrote of Leicester for his antiquarian friend Browne Willis: Bodleian: MS. Willis, LXXXV, fo. 47.

<sup>9</sup>B. Newton: *Sermons on Several Occasions* (1736), I, xvii.

<sup>10</sup>See H. Stocks: *Records of the Borough of Leicester, 1603-88* (1923), 597.

<sup>11</sup>*Dict. Nat. Biog.*, LXIII, 121.

<sup>12</sup>B. Newton: A Sermon preached at the Cathedral..Gloucester, on Monday, 30th January, 1715 (O.S.)...(London) 1716. See generally the article on Benjamin Newton in *Dict. Nat. Biog.*, XL, 365. There had been Jacobite disturbances at Gloucester the previous June. See C. Petrie: *Bolingbroke* (1931), 262.

<sup>13</sup>*Dict. Nat. Biog.*, XL, 366.

strong sense of the value of music in the services of the Church. In a sermon replete with classical and patristic allusions, which he preached at the Three Choirs Festival at Gloucester cathedral in September, 1748, he developed his ideas on the value of music, ideas that Gabriel, judging by his benefaction, warmly shared. He not only emphasised the value of music as an element in education, but defended its use in the worship of Almighty God, "as an *approved Part of a more ceremonial System...by no means inconsistent with the Spiritual Symplicity of the Christian Scheme*".<sup>14</sup> Thus, the influences of his family upon Gabriel Newton were predominantly Tory, and perhaps unusually ecclesiastical.

Gabriel was born in 1683, and was in due course apprenticed to the eminently respectable trade of a wool-comber,<sup>15</sup> then one of the more "organised" of eighteenth century callings,<sup>16</sup> though he later abandoned this for the more dignified occupation of inn-keeper. In 1702 he was admitted to the freedom of the borough of Leicester, as the eldest freeborn son of his father, paying for fine on admission a "pottle of wine".<sup>17</sup> In consequence of admission to the freedom, he gained the parliamentary franchise of the town, the right to ply his trade within the limits of the borough jurisdiction, and a potential footing in the civic hierarchy.

From this point, the interest of Gabriel's career lies chiefly in two directions: the growth of his public importance, and the accumulation of his fortune.

Gabriel Newton was for the greater part of his life concerned in the local government of Leicester: in the ward, in the then largely secular unit of the parish, in the municipal oligarchy that was the supreme governing body of the town, and as a justice of the peace sitting in the court of quarter sessions. In 1709 he appears as responsible for the humble, arduous, thankless and sometimes even dangerous office of constable of a ward, a sort of small Adam Overdo, whose business it was, during his

<sup>14</sup>J. Newton: *A Sermon, On the Natural, Moral, and Divine Influences of Music*, preached at the Cathedral... Gloucester, at the anniversary meeting of the three choirs of Gloucester, Worcester and Hereford, published at their joint request (1748), 21.

<sup>15</sup>J. Throsby: *History of Leicester* (Leicester, 1791), 187.

<sup>16</sup>E. Lipson: *Economic History of England*, III (1931) 397-9.

<sup>17</sup>H. Hartopp: *Register of the Freemen of the Borough of Leicester*, I (1927), 193.

year of unpaid and compulsory office (there being nothing then corresponding to the modern police force), to search out the petty illegalities of his neighbours, to report nuisances, and to cope with vagrants and evildoers.<sup>18</sup> Presentments from his year of office show him as reporting the nuisance of a stopped-up water-course in St. Mary's parish, and the illegal driving of carts with iron-bound wheels in the streets of his ward, to the detriment of their crude and primitive surfaces.<sup>19</sup>

In the following year he entered a sphere of greater dignity, though still one of sometimes onerous and expensive service, by his election to the Corporation as a member of the company of forty-eight common councilmen.<sup>20</sup> In 1711 he appears as collector for the poor, and later as churchwarden of St. Mary de Castro.<sup>21</sup> Greater responsibilities were put upon him in 1720, when he was appointed to serve the corporation as chamberlain,<sup>22</sup> this being an office involving a great deal of work and sometimes considerable expenditure. Apparently he managed to complete his year of office without the disastrous financial complications that beset some of his municipal brethren, who in the same position, to their own loss, failed to distinguish between their public and their private purses. In 1726 he was made an alderman.<sup>23</sup> This was an important promotion because, as the last town clerk of the unreformed Corporation explained, the aldermen were "more specifically the governing body of the Corporation".<sup>24</sup> Newton had by his promotion, therefore, a greater share in determining the policy of the municipal body, and, what was equally important in any corporation of the eighteenth century, in administering its patronage.

In the years 1730-2 he was particularly influential in town affairs. In 1732 he reached the peak of his civic progress by being elected to the mayoralty.<sup>25</sup> As mayor, he became justice of the

<sup>18</sup>I have discovered no evidence of his having served it by proxy.

<sup>19</sup>Leicester Corporation, MS. Sessions Rolls, 1709.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, MS. Hall Books, 15 September, 1710.

<sup>21</sup>St. Mary de Castro church, MS. vestry book, 3rd April, 1711 : 22nd April, 1712 : see the printed edition edited by J. R. Abney and indexed by H. Hartopp (1912), 181, 183.

<sup>22</sup>H. Hartopp : *Roll of the Mayors of Leicester* (Leicester, 1936), 142-4 : Leicester Corporation, MS. Chamberlains' Accounts, 1720-1.

<sup>23</sup>MS. Hall Books, 26 July, 1726.

<sup>24</sup>House of Lords Journals LXVII, 389.

<sup>25</sup>MS. Hall Books, 29th September, 1732.

peace and a member of the borough court of quarter sessions. As the great legal guide-books for justices, like the compositions of Burn, Shaw, and Nelson,<sup>25a</sup> show us, the justices of the peace were concerned with a multitude of responsibilities. In Leicester, as commonly elsewhere, the court of quarter sessions not merely sought to be a terror to the evildoer, but exercised considerable powers over the services of the good, for it acted as a sort of local legislature and executive, maintaining such rudimentary social services as there were. But for our present purpose there are two aspects of Newton's position as mayor that call for particular attention. In the first place, he joined the aldermen who had already held that high office as a member of the committee specially concerned with the governance of the town grammar school, which was soon, under Gerrard Andrews, to reach the period of its most brilliant success.<sup>26</sup> His connection with this institution was however already of some standing; for seven years earlier he appears as a trustee for the Haynes exhibition for grammar school boys, sons of freemen, entering as undergraduates at Lincoln college, Oxford.<sup>27</sup> His educational interests as a member of a family of schoolmasters and clergy were thus reinforced by his civic experience. In the second place, as mayor, he had a special responsibility in the administering of apprenticeship, an institution with which he was to concern himself in the dispositions of his property to charitable uses.

During the years 1730-2 he also held the office of churchwarden at St. Martin's, at a time of crisis.<sup>28</sup> This again, as we shall see, was to have a direct bearing on his benefactions. Newton appears also to have served offices in the parish of All Saints,<sup>29</sup> in the churchyard of which he was buried a few days after his death on 26th October, 1762, at the age of seventy-nine. As one who had been a most influential corporator and a generous benefactor, he was given the honour of a civic funeral.

<sup>25a</sup>MS. Chamberlain's Accounts, 1707-8 mention the purchase of Nelson's book "for the town's use": *Ibid.*, 1755-6, a bookseller's bill included Shaw's *Justice of the Peace*.

<sup>26</sup>Headmaster 1739-62. See G. Cowie: *History of Wyggeston's Hospital and Schools* (1893) 96.

<sup>27</sup>MS. Hall Books, 24th November, 1725.

<sup>28</sup>Leicester Cathedral, MS. S. Martin's vestry book, 1730-2 *passim*; *v. infra*, p. 181.

<sup>29</sup>Hartopp, *Mayors*, 142. I have as yet found no documentary evidence of this fact.

It is not irrelevant to observe that Newton's membership of the Corporation, extending from 1710 to 1762, covered a period of great change and much incident in the town. Politically, the town was rent with faction from time to time, especially at contested elections. There were also the Jacobite scares of 1715 and 1745, as well as sundry other smaller stirrings arising out of Jacobite suspicions. Economically also, these fifty years saw profound changes. It was during Newton's service as an alderman that the Corporation became involved in the disputes about the right of non-free tradesmen to trade in the borough that ended in its defeat in Green's case in the middle of the century.<sup>30</sup> Newton himself, no doubt in virtue of his calling as innkeeper, was interested in the development of road traffic that during the eighteenth century made provincial towns so much more accessible; and he represented the Leicester Corporation on the trust of the Harbrough—Loughborough turnpike, to which it had advanced a loan.<sup>31</sup>

Newton's civic importance had solid financial foundations. Unlike his bookish relative Benjamin, he showed unusual ability in making a fortune; and to this success, judicious matrimony contributed not a little. He married thrice, each time in such a way as to strengthen his position in the borough oligarchy. First, in 1715, he took to wife Elizabeth, daughter of Alderman Wells: second in 1728, Mary, daughter of George Bent, also a prominent corporator: and third, in 1738, Eleanor, daughter of John Bakewell, of Normanton on the Heath.<sup>32</sup>

As so wisely connected a member of the Tory Corporation of Leicester, Newton, like the other members of his family, whom we have discussed, was a stout "Church and King" man. In fact, like the Leicester Corporation, Newton was so strongly Tory as to incur the charge of Jacobitism.<sup>33</sup> The respectable inn of which he became the landlord, the "Horse and Trumpet", near the High Cross, was a Tory meeting-place, and was even thought of as a den of Jacobite plotters. Unfortunately for such specu-

<sup>30</sup>Members of this Society will know Thompson's treatment of these incidents.

<sup>31</sup>Leicester Museum, MS. 15 D 34/1 Minute book of the Loughborough—Harbrough trust: from 1726 many references to Newton: Leicester Corporation, MS. Hall Books, 26th January, 21st February, 1725/6.

<sup>32</sup>Hartopp, *Mayors*, 142-3.

<sup>33</sup>I hope to deal with the charge against the Corporation in a future paper.

lations, there is definite evidence that Newton was not a Jacobite. For he quite certainly took the oaths of abjuration and allegiance.<sup>34</sup> Like most other Tories, he was able to combine veneration for the Martyr King, and dislike for the Hanoverian Princes, with submission to *de facto* authority. Even were there not documentary evidence that Newton took the oaths, there are strong *prima facie* grounds for expecting that Newton would be no Jacobite. Above all, there is his character.<sup>35</sup> A self-made man, with an eye for successful marriage like Newton's, would not be so blind as to risk his property for the politically inept Stuart pretenders. We may safely say that had Newton been a real Jacobite, with any more than a largely sentimental regard for the later Stuarts, he would not have made so ample a fortune and so adequate marriages, that he could lend freely of his substance,<sup>36</sup> and was able, in the most respectable manner to enrich his parish church of St. Martin, at the instance of his wife Elizabeth, with a fine chandelier,<sup>37</sup> to which the Corporation gave a companion,<sup>38</sup> and that he could, as his crowning efforts, both start schools in his lifetime, and provide for them after his death.

## CHAPTER II

APART from his inherited tendencies and civic experience, three groups of circumstances may be more particularly traced as influencing profoundly Gabriel Newton's benefactions for schools and apprenticeships. These may be associated severally with three persons:—Samuel Carte, vicar of St. Martin's; John Jackson, confrater and afterwards master of Wigston's Hospital; and his own son George.

The first of these, Samuel Carte, represents for our present purpose chiefly the general educational opinion of the high Churchmen of the time. The chief instrument of popular education

<sup>34</sup>MS. Sessions Rolls, 1710.

<sup>35</sup>I may perhaps be permitted to refer to Mr. John Capel's play *The Great Gabriel*, which seems to me to contain a very probable reconstruction of the Alderman's character.

<sup>36</sup>cf. *Transactions*, ante, XIX, part I (1935-6) 42. Further evidence of this occurs below, in this present essay.

<sup>37</sup>Nichols *Leicestershire* I, ii (1815), 593. This was during a general internal restoration under order from the Bishop of Lincoln, Leicester Cathedral, *loc. cit.*, 1724-6.

<sup>38</sup>MS. Hall Books, 26 January, 1725/6.

in the Church was the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, founded in 1698.<sup>1</sup> This body concerned itself with the dissemination of orthodox religious literature, and with providing, by means of subscriptions, charity schools, principally in London, but also in the provinces. Samuel Carte was the Society's local representative in Leicester.<sup>2</sup> He also enjoyed the close acquaintance of Gabriel Newton.

The S.P.C.K. schools aimed at teaching the three R's, together with the doctrinal and sociological principles of the Catechism. These latter, as expounded by such divines as Tucker, dean of Gloucester, were treated as if they had in view only the state to which it had already pleased God to call the Christian man, and not, as the Catechism actually puts it, to which it *shall* please God to call him. Thus there was great anxiety to show that the education in these schools would not cause the poor to aspire unduly above their station, and to deplete the ranks of those to whom humbler tasks should be assigned.<sup>3</sup> These charity schools were often associated with schemes for paying the apprenticeship premiums of their pupils; for apprenticeship, though generally on the decline, was still valued by the conservative. More suspect than the Society's theological and social principles, were, in its early days, its politics. In spite of its care to exclude from its membership any who were disaffected to the Hanoverian succession,<sup>4</sup> its enemies accused it of using its schools as a means of Jacobite propaganda, so that their popularity waned. It might seem that this effect, on similar projects, would have been specially noticeable, in Leicester, where the local agent of the Society was himself an extreme Tory high Churchman, had one son whose loyalty was doubtful,<sup>5</sup> and another, the celebrated historian Thomas Carte, on whose head as a non-juring Jacobite

<sup>1</sup>See in general: J. W. Adamson: *A Short History of Education* (1930) 197 ff.

<sup>2</sup>McClure: *A Chapter of English Church History* (1888), 176, 193, 273.

<sup>3</sup>cf. J. Tucker: A Sermon preached at Christ Church, London, on 7th May, 1766: especially p. 13, footnote 8. See also Frank Smith: *History of English Elementary Education, 1706-1902* (1931) 41-2.

<sup>4</sup>S.P.C.K., MS. Abstract Letter Book, VII, 5190: a corespondent in 1717 congratulates the Society on purging itself of non-juring clergy.

<sup>5</sup>See my paper on Samuel Carte, *An Eighteenth Century High Churchman*, in *Theology*, XXIX (1934), 272-286, 325.

plotter a price was set in 1722 by the government.<sup>6</sup> Yet in fact, in Leicester, Newton was able to observe the setting-up of more than one school on S.P.C.K. lines. In 1714 John Rogers, Archdeacon of Leicester, informed the Society of the endowment of a school, together with apprenticeship premiums, by Matthew Simons,<sup>7</sup> and in 1716 Carte reported the endowment of apprenticeships by a deceased parishioner.<sup>8</sup> Newton's own benefaction showed the influence of the Society's ideals.

The second group of circumstances were more specifically ecclesiastical. They concerned more particularly John Jackson. Two men could hardly have differed more in their opinions than Jackson and Newton, or have been more tenacious in holding them. Newton, as a high Churchman, set great store by ceremonial correctitude, and Leicester annalists have preserved stories of his browbeating negligent and slovenly clergy. Above all, he was uncompromisingly orthodox. Consequently, his temper was particularly ruffled when the peace of Carte's parish was disturbed by the political and ecclesiastical heterodoxy of Jackson. Jackson was a disciple of the celebrated Dr. Clarke, the leader of the "Arian" school, who had been his predecessor in the mastership at Wigston's hospital.<sup>9</sup> Not being so discreet as his more famous predecessor, John Jackson scandalously consorted with dissenters: like Clarke, he boggled at the Athanasian creed.<sup>10</sup> Carte's attempts to prevent Jackson from preaching Arian doctrines in his parish involved the co-operation of Newton, who was churchwarden at the most critical stage in the disputes, when proceedings were taken against Jackson in the chamber of the Duchy of Lancaster.<sup>11</sup> It is important for our present purpose to notice that it was precisely those traditional Anglican, and indeed un-

<sup>6</sup>In 1722: Hearne, *Collections*, VII (Oxford Historical Society, 1906) 394: there was a warrant for his arrest in 1744, *Egmont Diary* (Historical MSS. Commission, 1923), III, 289. See also Greaves, *A Scheme for the Counties*, in *Eng. Hist. Rev.* XLVIII (1933), 630-8.

<sup>7</sup>S.P.C.K., *Ibid.*, V, 4201. Public Record Office C 91/20/19: C 93/33/1.

<sup>8</sup>S.P.C.K., *Ibid.*, VII, 4942.

<sup>9</sup>S.P.C.K., *Ibid.*, IX, 5837. R. Beale of S. Mary Ottery, Devon, 13th December, 1718, writes that "Dr. Clarke's disciples grow numerous in most places".

<sup>10</sup>*Theology*, *loc. cit.*

<sup>11</sup>Bodleian, MS. Carte, 117, ff. 457-8 draft of petition of Gabriel Newton and John Cartwright, churchwardens of S. Martin's, against Jackson's preaching.

doubtedly oecumenical, beliefs, threatened by Jackson, and defended by Carte and Newton in 1730-32, that Newton in the last years of his life thought by his benefactions to strengthen perpetually.

Third in our trio of important persons was George Newton. George Newton, the only son of Gabriel Newton to survive the early years of infancy, himself died at the age of eighteen, in 1746. Gabriel Newton having now therefore no son to whom he could leave his plentiful fortune, decided, after much consideration, to devote the greater part of it to the "religious education of children...of all others the most extensive branch of charity".<sup>12</sup> To this object he devoted the larger part of his wealth, which was estimated at £14,000.<sup>13</sup>

### CHAPTER III

FROM the scanty evidence at our disposal, it appears that Gabriel Newton, after the fashion not uncommon in the philanthropy of the period, founded a school in his lifetime. That interesting ecclesiastic, William Bickerstaffe, relates that when he was nineteen, that is, in 1747, he taught Mr. Newton's school of Greencoats in St. Martin's church, from eight to eleven in the morning, and from three to five or after in the afternoon. There were thirty-five of these boys, clothed in green, given a halfpenny coarse roll each for breakfast, taught reading, writing and accounts, and apprenticed with five pounds. This venture suffered from the alderman's irritability, which was notorious, for even Carte found that Newton was not always easy to get on with.<sup>1</sup> Consequently the alderman's schemes, which were often extraordinary,<sup>2</sup> aroused opposition. However, the loyal Bickerstaffe held that Newton was "crossed, malign'd and persecuted by an ungrateful tribe", though it is more than likely that the alderman's imperious temper was more at fault than lesser men's ingratitude. Thus,

<sup>12</sup>Nichols I, ii, 598, memorial tablet in the sanctuary at Leicester Cathedral.

<sup>13</sup>*Gentleman's Magazine* XXXII (1762), 552.

<sup>1</sup>Anecdotes given by Throsby and Nichols in places cited. There is evidence that he quarrelled with Carte in 1738 about setting up a monument "at the end of Heyrick's Chancel": MS. S. Martin's Vestry Book, No. 19, 3rd May, 1738.

<sup>2</sup>Throsby, *History*, 188; Nichols, I, ii, 611, note 1.

in consequence of this opposition, Newton's venture resembled other projects for maintaining schools in being short-lived,<sup>3</sup> and after a few years it closed down. The alderman none the less "promised to do something that way by will". He made an offer to Lincoln, but that city fell in his estimation by declining it.<sup>4</sup> A school appears, however, to have been satisfactorily established at Bedford.<sup>5</sup>

After these preliminary failures, the real history of Newton's foundation begins in the years 1760-62. In 1760 Gabriel Newton conveyed to the Corporation of Leicester lands in the County of Leicester at Earl Shilton, Barwell, Bushby and Great Stretton, for charitable uses, the Corporation to act as trustees.<sup>6</sup> This legal proceeding was formerly concluded by the enrolment of the indenture of bargain and sale in Chancery. By the terms of the trust the Corporation was to pay, out of the revenues of these lands, £26 yearly to the Corporations of Bedford, Buckingham, Hertford and Huntingdon: £26 also to the ministers and overseers of the parishes of Ashby-de-la-Zouch and St. Neot's; and £20 16s. to the ministers and overseers of Barwell and Earl Shilton. These payments were to be used for the clothing and education of sons of indigent parents belonging to the Established Church. The Corporation of Leicester was given rights of visitation, and empowered to withdraw the charity from places not complying with the regulations specified by the Founder. A second indenture of bargain and sale, also enrolled in Chancery,<sup>7</sup> endowed a school at Northampton with £26 a year out of lands at Cadeby in Leicestershire. The rest of the income from the Cadeby lands was to be devoted to apprenticeship premiums, for the sons of indigent Anglican parents in Leicester, "without regard to any particular parish", this part of the charity to be administered entirely at the discretion of the Common Hall.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>3</sup>cf. S.P.C.K., *loc. cit.*, V, 3929, Carte reports 13th March, 1713/14 that at Leicester "two boys...cloathed by one person and taught by another are lately dropt".

<sup>4</sup>*Gentleman's Magazine* LIX (1789), part i, 20-4; C. J. Billson, *Leicester Memoirs* (Leicester, 1924), 135-6; Nichols I, ii, 320, 514.

<sup>5</sup>Nichols, I, ii, 555, note 1. Account of Newton's visit to the Bedford school in 1757.

<sup>6</sup>MS. Hall Books, 8th February, 1760.

<sup>7</sup>Public Record Office, C 54/6094, Close Roll, I Geo. III, 19, 13. MS. Hall Books, Report of 3rd March, 1808.

<sup>8</sup>This account is based on the report in MS. Hall Books, 3rd March, 1808.

Finally, by his will, made on 21st July, 1761, Newton bequeathed to the Corporation of Leicester, out of his personal estate, £3,250, to be so invested by the trustees as to bring in the greatest possible interest. The income was to be devoted "towards the Cloathing, Schooling and Educating of thirty-five Boys or as many as my Trustees shall think proper...of indigent or necessitous parents of the Established Church of England in this town...without any regard to any particular parish", the boys to be chosen in the Common Hall. These provisions were slightly modified by a codicil of 2nd March, 1762, by which £2,500 of the original sum was given out of personal estate for the Leicester school, and the remainder, £750, to be paid out of the sale of the house he was then living in. Should the house not be sold within a year, or by the date of his wife's death, sums to the value of £91 were to be drawn by the Corporation out of other rents. Should its sale yield more than £1,000, the surplus was to be divided amongst the other beneficiaries. £200 was to be devoted to his funeral and to a monument.<sup>9</sup>

The spirit of the endowment is fully indicated in the conditions set forth in the trust deed of 1760.<sup>10</sup> This reveals plainly the influence of the political and ecclesiastical controversies of Newton's lifetime. Three conditions of a religious kind were laid down by Newton. First, the schoolboys were not merely to be selected exclusively from Anglican families; they were also to attend daily and join in the liturgical worship of the Church. For, argued the alderman, if they were obliged for a series of years to attend the daily office,

might it not reasonably be hoped they were in the most likely way to receive such impressions of religion as might sometime work together for their future happiness as well as be a means to improve their condition in this present life.

In the second place, no town was to enjoy the benefit of the bequest unless the Athanasian creed was duly received and recited as enjoined in the rubric in the Book of Common Prayer. This composition Newton held to be

<sup>9</sup>Public Record Office, C 12/820/82, transcript of will, sworn to be correct.

<sup>10</sup>Abstract given in Nichols, I, ii, 611-618.

the completest body of divinity ever composed since the time of the apostles, and a full answer to all heretical objections to the doctrine and tenets of the Church of England, concurring with Dr. Waterland in his history of that Creed, who deemed the ministers and parishioners of any place who did not read and receive the same as directed by the Rubrick of the Church of England to be lukewarm Christians.

No doubt Waterland's book was in Newton's small library, which was valued after his death at three guineas.<sup>11</sup> Only one contingency could absolve beneficiaries from the obligation of reciting the *Quicumque*, so highly esteemed by Newton and his teachers, namely, the abrogation by authority of Crown or Parliament of the rubric in question,

which...in the opinion of the said Gabriel Newton would be a greater blow to Church and State than the taking off the head of the Royal Martyr Charles the First.

The third condition laid down by the alderman shows again his love of the Liturgy, and is also, like his possession of an organ,<sup>12</sup> evidence of his feeling for music. No place was to receive money from his foundation unless the Greencoat boys were taught to sing the psalms, and, in the phraseology of the time, to tone the responses during divine service,<sup>13</sup> so as to adorn with music the "Spiritual Simplicity of the Christian Scheme".

Equally explicit were the rules laid down for the management of the schools. The boys were to be between the ages of seven and fourteen; once every year, or fifteen or eighteen months, each was to have a green cloth waistcoat and breeches, of material not under twenty pence per yard, a shirt of flaxen cloth not under thirteen pence per yard, with stockings, caps, and other apparel, such as Gabriel Newton "doth now or lately did allow some time past". They were to be given instruction in writing and arithmetic, as well as in toning and psalmody.

<sup>11</sup>Public Record Office, C 12/395/31; inventory of personal estate: the whole amounted to over £4,500.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, valued at £13.

<sup>13</sup>For the place of music in the popular cultural life of this period see J. D. Chambers: *Nottinghamshire in the Eighteenth Century* (1932), 306, there is a good deal of evidence concerning this in W. Gardiner's *Music and Friends* (1838).

## CHAPTER IV

It was some years before the Corporation of Leicester could give effect to the schemes so generously planned by Gabriel Newton. Litigation held up the carrying out of those, that were to be maintained out of his real estate, while the winding-up of his personal estate presented difficulties. A considerable amount went in lawyers' fees and bad debts. In 1774, Simpson & Coleman, executors of the will, explained to the Court of Chancery that, in obedience to a decree of that Court of 1767 and an order of 1771, they had made all endeavours to collect debts due to the alderman. But many of the debtors had "put off the payment of such debts with various excuses, some could not be found out nor heard of...and others had become insolvent and unable to pay their debts before the death of the...Testator or had compounded or agreed the same in his lifetime". There were some bad cases. Complaint was made particularly of David Wells, Newton's brother-in-law, in search of whom Coleman had actually ridden over to Burbage and Hinckley. "Dorothy Winstanley, another debtor...absconded for many years"; a writ was taken out against her in vain, and, since then, she had "died insolvent in the Fleet or some other prison and Clement Winstanley Esquire one of her relations...has declared that he is ready to pay...the Principal money due from her...but will not pay any Interest for the same". John Cartwright, a former mayor, became bankrupt soon after his year of office, and paid a dividend of only nine shillings and sixpence in the pound. Later, a further dividend of sixpence or eightpence was paid, but there was a suspicion of sharp practice in this case, in his "having contracted for a purchase of upwards of Nine Hundred Pounds which he made use of as a reason to put off" the executors from pressing him.<sup>1</sup>

Finally, twenty years after the alderman's death, the Corporation was awarded the two thousand, four hundred and nine pounds, thirteen and fivepence of the bequest that remained to it; and of that sum £2,300 was ordered to be at once invested.<sup>2</sup> It was

<sup>1</sup>Public Record Office, C 12/443/20.

<sup>2</sup>MS. Hall Books, 23rd September, 1782; signed and sealed power of attorney to Robert Smith of Lombard Street, London, banker, to receive for the Corporation £2,409 13s. 5d. certified by a report to be due to the Corporation of Leicester in the causes Simpson v. the Borough of Leicester, and Simpson v. Nedham.

therefore now possible by June, 1784, for the Common Hall to appoint a committee of twenty-nine members, five being a quorum, to consider the state of the funds and make plans to organise the Leicester Greencoat School.<sup>3</sup>

By December the committee had its plan. The income from consolidated bank annuities being assured, the committee recommended the purchase and use of part of the old Shambles as a good place for the schooling of the first thirty-five boys, and submitted plans and drawings for the adaptation and equipment of the buildings. At the same time regulations were drawn up for organisation and conduct of the school. A master was to be appointed at thirty pounds a year, to teach the three R's, and to attend the boys to service at St. Martin's on Sundays, Wednesdays, Fridays and holy days. For ten pounds a year, another master was to teach toning and psalmody. No boy over eleven years of age was to be elected. It was also ordered that

a Bible of the smallest size including the service of the Church and the singing Psalms, and also a spelling book be provided for each of such Boys. Also slates and writing books for such of them as shall be taught to write.

Further, to each boy was to be given

an halfpenny roll of bread...on every school day and Sunday.<sup>4</sup>

At the next Common Hall, in January, 1785, John Pratt was elected schoolmaster, with William Tyler as singing master, at the salaries specified.<sup>5</sup> At last, in March, the first thirty-five boys were chosen, and it was ordained that the school should be started on the next Lady Day.<sup>6</sup> From this date we find regular entries in the minute books concerning the election of boys, the appointment of masters, and even, on one occasion, the expulsion of an unsatisfactory pupil.<sup>7</sup>

The next stage in the history of the Leicester school involves us in some attempt to follow the fortunes of Newton's bequest of real estate. If it took twenty years to settle up the personal estate, it took forty to settle the real estate.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, 2nd June, 1784.

<sup>4</sup>MS. Hall Books, 6th December, 1784; *Leicester and Nottingham Journal*, 11th December, 1784; announcement that the school is opening.

<sup>5</sup>MS. Hall Books, 14th January, 1785.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, 11th March, 1785.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, 18th August, 1801.

The root of the trouble lay in the mortmain law, as modified in 1736. In principle this forbade the grant of lands to corporations, without royal licence so to do, since the Crown might thereby lose succession dues. However, municipal incorporation came generally to give exemption from the mortmain law,<sup>8</sup> and since the time of Elizabeth charitable bequests of various types were exempted. The act of 1736, hotly contested by High Churchmen,<sup>9</sup> sought to close these remaining loopholes. Bequests to corporations, for charitable purposes, had now to be made by formal conveyance at least twelve months before the death of the testator, and in the six months after the conveyance, the deed must be enrolled in Chancery. The gift must be irrevocable and take effect at once.<sup>10</sup> Newton's deeds satisfied these conditions. But opportunity was given to contest the Corporation's right to enjoy the Newton lands by an irregularity in the will. For, in this, Newton, after providing for certain individuals, bequeathed to the Leicester Corporation, for the purposes of his charity, the residue of his real estate—and this without any of the formalities demanded by the last mortmain act. Yet, even so, the Corporation had the advantage of possession, and could not be dispossessed till the heir-at-law was discovered and instituted. By preventing his institution for a sufficiently long period, it could convert possession into ownership.

It was apparently this principle that determined the history of Alderman Newton's foundation until 1808. After Newton's death, proceedings were set on foot to find the heir-at-law; and in 1768, at the Lent Assizes in Leicester, the strongest claim was held to be that of Richard Walker, an almsman of Trinity Hospital. Richard declared himself to be next of kin by descent from Michael Newton, who was buried at Houghton-on-the-Hill in 1661, and as the grandson of an aunt of Gabriel Newton on his father's side.<sup>11</sup> According to Richard Walker's grandson, George Newton Walker, who was heir-at-law in 1808, the Corporation adopted the most disingenuous methods to cir-

<sup>8</sup>See M. Weinbaum, *The Incorporation of Boroughs* (Manchester 1937); M. Bateson, *Leicester Borough Records III* (1905) 248, 362.

<sup>9</sup>See E. Carpenter: *Thomas Sherlock* (1936), 125-7.

<sup>10</sup>*Statutes at Large*, XVII, 82-3; 9 Geo. II, c. 36. This account is based on the article "mortmain" in G. Jacob, *The Law Dictionary* (edition 1809).

<sup>11</sup>Public Record Office, C 12/820/32, interrogatories on behalf of Richard Walker.

cumvent his grandfather. Richard Walker, according to this account, when he went to London to make his claim, was met by a bland and affable stranger, who gave him abundance of feeding and drinking, new clothes, and eight or ten guineas; and then safely stowed him on a coach, and returned him to Leicester. This happened several times, and, eventually, Richard Walker died. Of his two sons, the elder was a soldier in foreign parts, and so was not available to assert his supposed right. Upon the death of the soldier, which is said to have been duly proved, his younger brother, Thomas Walker, began to prosecute the family claim. He, under circumstances that appeared to his family to have been created by the intrigues and chicanery of the Corporation, fell into prison for debt. While in prison, at Derby, he was offered a thousand pounds to sign a deed by which he would resign all claims to the Newton inheritance. This offer he indignantly refused; for he was unwilling to "enter into any unworthy compromise to rob his successors". After his liberation from gaol, he was unable to pursue his claim any further by reason of poverty. He died in 1799.<sup>12</sup>

This was the story told by the last of the disappointed claimants. Some of the statements in it were proved to be wrong. For instance, he asserted that the more honest members of the Corporation favoured his cause; but the Corporation replied that its members were unanimously against him. He also accused the Corporation of having sold houses in the market-place left by Newton, and diverted the proceeds to its own use; whereas, in fact, the houses were sold before one of the Masters in Chancery to pay legal costs and debts. Apart from these specific points, the Corporation denied the whole story in general terms, and defended the honour of its solicitor, Caleb Lowdham.<sup>13</sup>

Whatever degree of truth there may have been in George Newton Walker's story, it is clear that the Corporation's object was to acquire an unassailable prescriptive right to the properties bequeathed to it. Reporting to the Common Hall, the Alderman Newton's Committee maintained that

the delay which has occurred in extending these charities...  
has not been occasioned by any Indifference or want of

<sup>12</sup>*Leicester Journal*, 27th May, 1808.

<sup>13</sup>MS. Hall Books, 8th June : *Leicester Journal*, 10th June, 1808.

Diligence in the Trustees, but, on the contrary, by the litigious disposition of his heir-at-law—for until his claim had become barred *by time*, it is obvious that the Corporation could not without *very great risk*, have appropriated the surplus rents otherwise than in the manner they have done, viz., by investing them in the funds from time to time, in order that they might be disposed of according to the pending suits.<sup>14</sup>

Moreover it is clear that the Corporation, in view of the plain intentions of the alderman, had a strong moral claim to the property. Consequently the heir-at-law's attempt in 1808 to raise a public subscription in defence of his claims failed.<sup>15</sup> Now that forty years' continuous use had been maintained, now that "time had barr'd his claims", the Corporation was able to carry out further the provisions of the trust deeds.<sup>16</sup>

In the management of the funds now at its disposal, the Corporation showed a conscientious regard for Newton's desires in all three branches of his benefactions: the Leicester school, the schools in other places, and the apprenticeship premiums. It took no important step without legal advice.

The value of the bequest was considerable, and by 1808 the income from it had greatly increased, being more than twice the amount expended during the year. At the time of Newton's death, the rents of the estates for the founding of schools amounted to £211 11s. 11d.; by 1808 they were £516. In addition, the investment of the surplus rents was producing an income of £67 10s. 0d.<sup>17</sup> Finding its resources so great, the Corporation decided, on the advice of its committee, to establish a second school in Leicester, and consolidate it with the existing school founded out of personal estate, thus raising the number of pupils to eighty. The old master being unequal to the increased responsibilities of his post, a new master named Thomas Postlethwaite, was appointed to succeed him.<sup>18</sup> Postlethwaite showed himself in accord with the spirit of the trust and the views of the Corporation when he wrote, two years later, a pamphlet in confutation

<sup>14</sup>M.S. Hall Books, report of committee, 3rd March, 1808.

<sup>15</sup>*Leicester Journal*, 17th June, 15th July, 1808.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, 25th March, 1808: Nichols, I, ii, 611 note 2.

<sup>17</sup>MS. Hall Books, *loc. cit.*

<sup>18</sup>MS. Hall Books, 15th June, 1808.

of the educational opinions expressed in a speech at Leicester by Joseph Lancaster, the nonconformist champion of education on non-sectarian lines.<sup>19</sup> The first eighteen of the additional Green-coat boys were chosen in January, 1809.<sup>20</sup> The school received its next considerable increase in 1828, when its numbers were raised to a hundred.<sup>21</sup>

A chronic problem for the charity schools was the difficulty of getting suitable masters, the salaries being generally low. Too often the charity schoolmasters were the "refuse of superior schools", even "of society at large".<sup>22</sup> In 1810, the salary of Postlethwaite was increased by £10, he paying the taxes and levies on the school, as well as the school house, and finding coals and candles. It was, however, made quite plain that, "if the number of boys should hereafter be increased to a hundred, he must not expect any further increase of salary".<sup>23</sup> In 1824 James Somerfield Stanhope was appointed to be Postlethwaite's next successor but one, and his duties, formerly limited to those of singing-master, were extended to include those of schoolmaster also; but he was to receive no more salary than his predecessor Pratt had enjoyed for the work of schoolmaster alone.<sup>24</sup> This arrangement failed. It became necessary to dismiss Stanhope because of the dishonesty of his wife, and because he himself had offended in not giving his whole time to the school. Mrs. Stanhope had pawned property belonging to the school and given away coal supplied for its use, and, to crown all, had broken into the premises to obtain money which her husband had received for his quarter's salary, and "deposited in his desk in the schoolroom as a place of greater security than his own dwelling house".<sup>25</sup> Stanhope's successor was not expected to do two men's work for one man's not unusually generous salary; for a music master was appointed at £15 a year, the additional £5 being possibly a recognition of the fact that the new master was by profession a

<sup>19</sup>*Leicester Journal*, 27th December, 1810.

<sup>20</sup>MS. Hall Books, 5th January, 1809.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, 27th August, 1828.

<sup>22</sup>J. Lancaster, *Improvements* (1803), 11.

<sup>23</sup>MS. Hall Books, 8th October, 26th November, 1810.

<sup>24</sup>James Valentine appointed to succeed Postlethwaite, *ibid.*, 31st July, 1820; Stanhope appointed, *ibid.*, 2nd June, 1824.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, 16th March 1826.

musician,<sup>26</sup> and not, like Bull, Stanhope's predecessor in that capacity, a tailor.<sup>27</sup>

Besides problems of staffing, the Corporation had to consider also how best to provide for the instruction of the boys. To judge from the minutes of the Common Halls, the Corporation took reasonable care of the interests of the pupils. In 1809, Alderman Read was entrusted with the supplying of benches and other necessaries.<sup>28</sup> After three years, the committee expressed itself as gratified by the "Rapid Improvement of the Boys by the present plan of education", and at the same time fixed the lowest age of entrance at nine years, and the period of education at three years, with extensions of half a year when pupils had lost time through illness.<sup>29</sup> Evidently the school met a need; for in 1811 order was taken for the excluding of boys discharged from other charity schools in Leicester,<sup>30</sup> and the rules concerning the age of the pupils were strictly enforced.<sup>31</sup> In 1815 steps were taken to ensure that sons of Anglican parents only should be admitted to the school or apprenticed by the Foundation,<sup>32</sup> a point that was still causing difficulty eleven years later.<sup>33</sup>

Care was always taken that the boys should go to Church, and arrangements were made for their accommodation in St. Martin's,<sup>34</sup> not apparently quite as the Corporation would have liked,<sup>35</sup> and in 1824, for some reason not specified, the boys were transferred to St. Mary de Castro.<sup>36</sup>

Finally it is interesting to observe that the Corporation evolved a committee for the administration of the school. At first Alderman Newton's School Committee consisted of the Mayor of Leicester and the Justices.<sup>37</sup> This body was for three years (1805-8) engaged in watching the interest of the Corporation

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, 5th September, 1826.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, 5th January, 1810.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, 5th January, 1809.

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*, 9th March, 1810, "and not for any other excuse whatever".

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, 29th January, 1811.

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, 8th April, 1811, gentlemen nominating to produce certificates of boys' ages.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*, 11th December, 1815 certificates to be obtained from minister and churchwardens.

<sup>33</sup>*Ibid.*, 5th September, 1826, complaint that "a considerable number of boys have been introduced into the school...children of dissenting parents".

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*, 6th March, 1809.

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*, 9th March, 1810.

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*, 8th September, 1824.

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*, 19th December, 1805.

pending final settlement of legal difficulties. It appointed a Receiver for the trust,<sup>38</sup> and in 1808 made a useful report upon the affairs of the charity.<sup>39</sup> In 1809 it advised the appointment of a special committee for the management of the Leicester school. This was to consist of the Mayor, three aldermen, and six councilmen, two of these being the borough chamberlains.<sup>40</sup> Any member of the Corporation might, however, attend and vote at its meetings, "though the business of the School is more particularly confined to the care of the Committee".<sup>41</sup> This committee remained to the end of the old Corporation's existence an official part of Leicester's municipal constitution.

#### CHAPTER V

IN addition to increasing the size of the Leicester school, the committee of 1808, as a means of employing the great accumulation of funds, also recommended the extension of Gabriel Newton's plans for founding schools in other places. The records of the Corporation leave us in some doubt about the details of this scheme; but the main outlines of it are clear enough.

The committee recommended that offers of £26 a year should be made to the principal market towns of the county, besides those places named in the trust deed. Reporting in 1809, the committee told the Corporation that of the five towns approached, Harborough, Hinckley, Lutterworth, Loughborough and Melton, only Hinckley<sup>1</sup> accepted the offer on the terms laid down by the Founder. The offer was thereupon extended to populous villages, Great Wigston and Shepshed having already made application for the establishment of schools.<sup>2</sup> Grants were also made to Mountsorrel and Syston. There is evidence that other schools were later endowed at Lutterworth, Claybrook, and Lubenham.<sup>3</sup>

Although this extensive scheme might seem too great an undertaking for the Corporation, the Leicester aldermen and

<sup>38</sup>W. Heyrick to succeed late Alderman Chambers.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*, 3rd March, 1808.

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*, 5th January, 1809.

<sup>41</sup>It would be interesting to know how far the "openness" of this committee reflected a jealousy by the common hall of committee powers, such as affected the South Fields committee of the Corporation.

<sup>1</sup>Nichols, I, ii, 613 note; copy of letters between Hinckley and town clerk of Leicester. cf. H. J. Francis, *History of Hinckley* (1930), 134-5.

<sup>2</sup>MS. Hall Books, 27th July, 1810.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, 7th April, 1835, "lately endowed".

councillmen persevered in their conscientious attempt to organise the schools. In 1826 the grant to Hinckley was suspended, the schoolmaster of that place having complained of lack of attention in the locality to the interests of the school.<sup>4</sup> This suspension was certainly not permanent, since the school survived at Hinckley till 1856, when the grant was finally withdrawn, the trustees being again dissatisfied with the conduct of the school.<sup>5</sup> At Lutterworth, it turned out that the funds were used to clothe boys educated under other charities, and that in fact all the conditions of the grant were being flouted. The charity was therefore withdrawn in 1835.<sup>6</sup>

The most comprehensive visitation of the outlying schools resulted in the interesting and valuable report of 1833 being laid before the Common Hall. On the whole, the visitors were satisfied with what they found.

The committee had visited Northampton, Bedford, Buckingham, St. Neot's and Hertford. At Northampton fifty-four scholars were taught in a school-room erected by the Corporation of that place. The school was well managed and the conditions of the trust were observed. The only criticism was that the boys were clothed in blue and not in green coats, though "in other respects the clothing seemed to be superior".<sup>7</sup> Newton's boys were in fact very well treated by the Northampton Corporation. The report on the state of municipal Corporations published in 1835 informed the world that the master of Newton's school was paid at Northampton £47 10s. 0d., with allowance for pens, ink and fuel.

The proper funds of the charity would not be sufficient to defray the whole of this expense: but the Corporation contribute annually a voluntary donation of £34 11s. 3d.

The same amount was being given at the same time to another charity school. The commissioners also reported that the Northampton Corporation had built a new school and a master's house at a cost of £1,800 out of their own funds.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, 16th March, 1826.

<sup>5</sup>Francis, *op. cit.*, 145.

<sup>6</sup>MS. Hall Books, 7th April, 1835.

<sup>7</sup>MS. Hall Books, report transcribed 1st April, 1833; the visiting committee consisted of Henry Wood, Mansfield Gregory, and James Rawson junior, three prominent members of the Corporation.

<sup>8</sup>*Victoria County History, Northamptonshire* (1930) III, 62; Municipal Corporations Report (1835), 1975.

At Buckingham the school was well run, and good use was made of the accumulated surplus of funds; though the master was allowed to teach twenty more day scholars, other than those on Newton's foundation. For teaching the Greencoat boys he received £13 a year.<sup>9</sup>

At Huntingdon, Hertford, Bedford and St. Neot's the schools were all apparently well conducted, and received good local support. At Huntingdon, each of the aldermen subscribed a pound a year to the school, and the Corporation had to be reimbursed the £134 it had laid out on behalf of the charity, pending settlement of the legal affairs. Newton's boys at Huntingdon were taught along with about thirty boys of another foundation, apparently Walden's school, founded in 1719. The whole was known as the Greencoat school, and assisted by funds from the local charity of George Merritt in 1825, the revenues being of themselves not enough.<sup>10</sup> At Hertford, many gifts were made by local benefactors.<sup>11</sup> At Bedford, the school, visited by Gabriel Newton himself in 1757,<sup>12</sup> was apparently suspended in 1768 on account of the litigation, but resumed in 1797.<sup>13</sup> There the boys were "taught by a very competent master on Dr. Bell's system, and they appeared to be very well managed". The St. Neot's school had thirty-five boys properly clothed; it received additional support from another charity, and from the surplus funds accumulated during the litigation.<sup>14</sup>

The results of the investigation were in general very gratifying. The committee was perhaps most troubled by the blue coats at Northampton, for all their superior quality. A general observation followed; the visitors

found the Boys at all the Schools dressed in either cloth trousers or cloth Breeches—in most instances in green cloth trousers which appeared to harmonise well with the general appearance of the dress and to be most comfortable.

<sup>9</sup>*Victoria County History, Buckinghamshire*, II (1908) 220; *ibid.*, III (1925) 488 state that both Greencoat school and Royal Latin school were administered under a scheme established by the Board of Education 4th July, 1904.

<sup>10</sup>*Victoria County History, Huntingdonshire* II (1932), 118. Newton's charity in 1895 merged with the Grammar school.

<sup>11</sup>*Victoria County History, Hertfordshire* II (1908), 101. It began in 1798, *ibid.*, 93.

<sup>12</sup>*v. supra*, p. 188.

<sup>13</sup>*Leicester Journal*, 18th August, 1797.

<sup>14</sup>*Victoria County History, Huntingdonshire* II (1932), 118.

In 1833, then, it might appear that the Corporation was managing the project well. Two years later, however, there are signs of financial difficulty. This was indeed hardly surprising in view of the fact that Burbidge, the town clerk, was never able to account for £10,000 of money that he had received in trust for Alderman Newton's and Sir Thomas White's charities, except that under pressure he admitted to stopping £4,000 for legal fees.<sup>15</sup> Further, the school committee was in debt to the trust for several hundred pounds. Consequently, to make ends meet, the sums paid to schools at Hinckley, Lutterworth, Claybrook, and Lubenham were reduced from £26 to £20, though the committee emphasised that the "payments could not be more economically applied than they have been". Whether the visitation of the schools at Ashby-de-la-Zouch and Earl Shilton contemplated<sup>16</sup> at this time would have resulted in further economies cannot be said, for the old Corporation being dissolved nine months later, its order lapsed.

Lastly we have to notice the way in which the Corporation of Leicester managed the apprenticeship income from the Cadeby lands. Difficulties arose chiefly because Gabriel Newton's bequest was in 1808 meeting a need that was then greater than it had been at his death. In Leicestershire between 1761 and 1806 the number of apprenticeship indentures publicly recorded actually increased, and there was an increase generally in the principal industry of Leicester and district, that of the frame-worker knitters, though there was a falling off amongst the wool-combers.<sup>17</sup> Consequently, when the committee of 1808 found itself with an accumulated surplus of over £1,500 from the Cadeby lands available for apprenticeship premiums, it decided, rightly or wrongly, to employ the capital of the accumulations rather than the interest, in apprenticing boys at the rate of one-sixth of the money a year. The whole surplus was thus to be disposed of in six years, thirty-six boys being apprenticed annually in this way, no single premium was to exceed £8.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup>Leicester Corporation, MS. Council minutes, 19th and 21st August, 9th November, 1836.

<sup>16</sup>MS. Hall Books, 7th April, 1835.

<sup>17</sup>I am indebted to Dr. T. K. Derry of Repton School for information on this point, contained in his doctor's thesis, which he kindly allowed me to read.

<sup>18</sup>The precise sum, £1,513 2s. 11d.; also the rent of the Cadeby land in Newton's time £36, was now £100. MS. Hall Books, 3rd March, 1808.

Since apprenticeship enjoyed considerable popularity in the years before the repeal of the Statute of Artificers,<sup>19</sup> it was to be expected that the demand on this branch of Newton's charity would be great. Even after repeal, in 1815, 1822 and 1827 order had to be made to ensure that sons of Church parents only should benefit by the Cadeby lands, and that more particular enquiry should be made into the characters both of the boys to be apprenticed and of the masters under whom they were to serve.<sup>20</sup>

## CHAPTER VI

So far, then, as can be judged from the minute books of the Leicester Corporation, that body administered Newton's bequests with a conscientious attention to the wishes of the Founder. Indeed, it was a bequest after the heart of the Tory Corporation of Leicester, providing as it did support to the Established Church. It was therefore fitting that out of the funds of the Newton bequest, the Corporation should in 1810 contribute, in the name of William Heyrick, five pounds to the funds of the S.P.C.K.<sup>1</sup> The keenness of the Corporation to obtain the endowment was balanced by a becoming generosity towards the foundation. In 1824, the land on which the Leicester school was built, being Corporation property, was conveyed gratis to the use of the charity, with as much more land as might be necessary.<sup>2</sup> Care was taken also for the proper keeping of Gabriel Newton's tomb in All Saints' churchyard.<sup>3</sup> A last evidence of the corporators' appreciation of the Newton endowment is to be found in the bequest of one of the most important members of the body, Alderman Thomas Read, who bequeathed £200 to be invested in government securities, of which the interest was to be used for boys educated and apprenticed by the foundation.<sup>4</sup>

The Leicester Greencoat School seems to have been creditably carried on in the early part of the nineteenth century, according to the standards of the time. Discipline was strict and corporal

<sup>19</sup>cf. T. K. Derry, *Outlines of English Economic History* (1932), 166-7.

<sup>20</sup>MS. Hall Books, 11th December, 1815; 4th April, 1822; 17th September, 1827.

<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.*, 5th January, 1810.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, 29th January, 1804.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, 22nd July, 1799.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, 6th September, 1830.

punishment of some severity not uncommon.<sup>5</sup> Care was also taken to maintain the standard of respectability of the boys, and complaint was made by the committee that at the Lutterworth school the Greencoat boys were educated along with other boys, "a great part of them of the lowest class".<sup>6</sup>

The Liberal and Nonconformist opposition to the power of the old Corporation in Leicester did not, for all these efforts, regard the administration of Newton's endowment with any complacency. They complained to the municipal commissioners that political bias had influenced the grant of places in the Greencoat school. Of the eleven boys admitted in 1832-3, the parents of all but two had voted for the Tory candidate supported by the Corporation.<sup>7</sup> It is of course beyond doubt that the Leicester Corporation, like others, used its patronage to buy votes for its party. Yet, when the bitterness of political and sectarian conflict in Leicester is taken into account, and the fear, especially great in these years, for the safety of an unpopular Church, it is remarkable that of the eleven parents in question, since by the terms of the bequest they had to be Churchmen, there were as many as two that did not vote for the Tory, Corporate and Church interest.

To the distinctively modern outlook, it may be at first sight remarkable that the Leicester Corporation should have laid such stress on the ecclesiastical aspect of the benefaction. This stress appears most strikingly in the protest that the Corporation sent in July, 1835, against the changes in town government set forth in the Municipal Corporations Bill then before the Lords. The Leicester Tories saw quite plainly that if the changes proposed passed into law, there would be a transfer of power in Leicester from the Church Tories to the Chapel Liberals. In this connection, they emphasised the impropriety of transferring to dissenters the administration of Newton's charity. Especially might they complain, since the dissenters looked for leadership to

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, R. Read, *Modern Leicester* (1884), 56.

<sup>6</sup>MS. Hall Books, 7th April, 1835.

<sup>7</sup>Municipal Corporations Report (1835), 197. This was a similar proportion of Corporation votes to the parallel case of Northampton. See *ibid.*, 1978: 45 boys admitted: 1828-33: "of the parents five either had no vote or did not poll: 22 voted plumpers for the corporation candidates; 17 split their votes; only one voted against the corporation candidate".

the Unitarians of the Great Meeting, while Newton's foundation had been intended to foster devotion to the Blessed Trinity. Newton, they argued, had selected the Corporation of Leicester as his trustees "from the confidence which he entertained that the same Religious and other Principles which he knew to prevail amongst them in his day would prevail until the end of time". It was thus "a fraud of the gravest character" to take the estates from the persons so selected by the charitable donor, in order to give them to others, of "principles totally opposite to those which the Donor himself would have looked for in his trustees".

This "transcendental injustice"<sup>8</sup> was not prevented by the Corporation's eloquence. With the Nonconformist ascendancy, which began in Leicester when the reformed Corporation started on New Year's day, 1836, the Greencoat Schools entered upon a fresh period of their history, with which this paper is not intended to deal. No doubt the alderman might find matter for criticism in later developments; yet he could not fail to see that the fruit of his initiative, in Leicester at least, on a more ambitious intellectual plane, and conformably to the circumstances of the twentieth century, is still providing for numerous persons such opportunities "as might sometime work together for their future happiness, as well as be a means to improve their condition in this present life".

<sup>8</sup>MS. Hall Books, 24th July, 1835.